



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
"Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs"



September 3, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor
FROM: 
Russ Guiney, Interim Director
Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: **WAIVE ADMISSIONS FEES TO COUNTY'S FOUR GARDENS FOR
HOLDERS OF THE CALIFORNIA ADVANTAGE CARD
(AUGUST 17, 2004 AGENDA ITEM 37)**

At its meeting held August 17, 2004, the Board of Supervisors adopted the motion to waive admissions fees to County museums for CalWORKs and Refugee Cash Assistance and Food Stamp Program participants and their children. In addition, Parks and Recreation and affected Foundations were requested to explore the feasibility of extending a similar fee waiver to the County's four Arboreta and Botanic Gardens (Arboretum of Los Angeles County, Descanso Gardens, South Coast Botanic Garden, and Virginia Robinson Gardens).

The recommended action to give families receiving CalWORKs, Refugee Cash Assistance and Food Stamp benefits the opportunity to experience, at no cost, the beauty, tranquility, and historical and cultural value found in our gardens would be an educational and positive experience for to these low-income families. At this time, we deem there will be no direct fiscal impact to the gardens, with the exception of Descanso Gardens, which operates solely on revenue from admission fees, grants, and donations. However, there may be some impact on operational and maintenance costs to all four gardens if this recommendation results in increased attendance.

Reaching out to these children and their families is in accord with the gardens' mission to serve as authoritative advocates for greater understanding of nature, trees, shrubs, and exotic plants from various parts of the world; and to cultivate, grow, and exhibit plant collections that uniquely represent specific geographical areas. It is agreed that the waiving of admission fees at our gardens would provide the low-income population access to a venue they may otherwise never experience.

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With this in mind, we would like to suggest that the program be implemented as a one-year pilot program to determine the impact on attendance and operation and maintenance costs at each garden. At the end of the trial period, the program shall be evaluated and a determination established whether to continue or discontinue the program.

Should you have any questions, please call me at (213) 738-2953, or your staff may contact Assistant Director, Boyd Horan at (626) 369-8693.

RG:BY:gp:ee(feewaivermotion)

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors
Park Deputies